

Amendment to the Specification

Please replace paragraphs [0015] and [0016] with the replacement paragraphs below:

5 [0015] The present invention permits rules to be stored within a rulebase 108 that are
not currently effective. ~~In effect, the~~ The present invention provides a mechanism for
associating a valid start date and stop date for ~~the effectiveness of~~ each rule within a
rulebase 108 such that the rule is only employed by the rule server 104 if the date to
employ the rule is any date between the start date and the stop date, i.e. when the rule
10 is currently effective.

[0016] The functional steps performed by embodiments of the invention will now be
explained with reference to Fig. 2, which is a flow-chart illustrating the functional steps
of an embodiment of the invention. Initially, according to embodiments of the invention,
15 an administrator of the rule server 104 associates a start time and an end time with one
or more rules 205 within the rulebase 108. A start time is the moment in time when the
particular rule becomes effective, and the end time is the moment in time when the
particular rule is no longer effective. The term "effective" in this context means that the
particular rule will be applied by the rule engine 106 ~~at that particular moment in time.~~
20 In other words, when a transaction request is received by a rule server 104, only
~~effective rules~~ in effect, referred to herein interchangeably as effective rules, contained
within the rulebase 108 will be employed by the rule server 104. The administrator may
associate a start time and an end time with each rule through a variety of well
established means of applying input to a rule server 104. In an embodiment of the

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cont'd. invention, the administrator associates a start time and an end time through a graphical user interface, such as the one illustrated in Fig. 4A.
